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PANDORA

STORIES OF OLD GREECE

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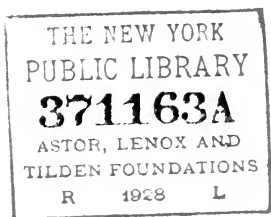
EMMA M. FIRTH

1917
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OH myths of ancient days, when earth, and air,
And water teemed with visions wondrous fair,
And loveliest spirits! Ne'er shall knowledge bold
Wrest from your ashes the sweet charm you hold.

D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS

BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO



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DOWN
CLUB
1894

INTRODUCTION.

“THERE is an instinct in the human heart
Which makes all fables it has coined —
To justify the reign of its belief,
And strengthen it by beauty’s right divine —
Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,
Which, like the hazel twig in faithful hands,
Points surely to the hidden springs of truth.”

ASIDE from their use as a means of strengthening the imagination, the myths embody ethical truths, which are helpful just in proportion to the intellectual activity which the stories arouse. The child lover will seek for the best means in accomplishing her end, — the harmonious culture of the child. In all that she does, she will be governed by the purest motives.

The telling of a story has a broader meaning than that of entertainment. Its real motive is the making of what the child loves a means by which he may be led to a clearer understanding of his own powers and possibilities, and of his relations to others.

The child lives wholly in the present. He is semi-barbaric in his tendencies toward self-interest. He needs to be lifted from an indefinite present of childish pleasure to a definite understanding of his own powers, and a better exercise of his will. If by means of a story, well told, he can grasp the simple truth contained in it, he is making progress in the right direction. He is getting a foundation for the future study of literature, and gaining an appreciation for the beautiful in art.

All modern tendencies are to make children too realistic, and to stifle, rather than to cultivate, the fine imagination necessary to the creation or enjoyment of art and literature. By presenting these myths, the product of a primitive people, and therefore adapted to the child, because of their beauty and simplicity, we are giving him good material for the growth of a healthful imagination.

While the general motive for telling stories is this, there are special motives in each story, which, if thoroughly appreciated, may enhance the value of the story. The first myth, a flower and sun myth, is designed to inspire in the child a feeling for the beauty and dignity of friendship. The story of Phæthon emphasizes the folly of unreasonable requests. Baucis and Philemon teach respect for the aged, and

hospitality. The Rhœcus urges the doing of the "duty which lies nearest." In nearly all the myths courage and self-forgetfulness are shown; and by arousing admiration for these qualities we may inspire in the child a desire to possess them.

These myths are meant to do for the little beginner what the study of literature does for the "children of a' larger growth." They are but beginnings for beginners; but with the sincere hope that they may accomplish the desired results, the writer submits them to her fellow-teachers and to the dear children of America.



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PRONUNCIATION OF PROPER NAMES.

Ād mē' tus.	Hām a dry' ads.
Ā crī' seus.	Hel' las.
Ae gē' an.	Hé li os.
Āid' es.	He phāes' tus.
Al cēs' tis.	Hy per bor' e ans.
Al cy' o ne.	I ris.
An drom' e da.	I o' ni an.
A pol' lo.	Mā' i a.
A rāch' ne (A rack ne).	Me du' sa.
A thē' ne.	Nē' ri ads.
Bau' cis.	O cé an us (O ke' an us).
Ca du' seus.	O lym' pus.
Cer' ber us.	Or' phe us.
Cē' yx.	Pan do' ra.
Cha' ron (Káron).	Phā' e thon.
Cim mē' ri an.	Phi lē' mon.
Clym' e ne.	Pol y dec' tes.
Cyg' nos.	Pro mē' theus.
Dān' ae.	Pro ser' pi ne.
Dāph' ne.	Psy' che.
Dēm' e ter.	Rhoē' cus.
Diē' tys.	Ser' i phos.
E' os.	Thes' sa ly.
E' ris.	Thēt is
E' ros.	The' mis.
Ep i mē' theus.	Tí' tans.
Euryd' i ce.	Zeus (Zūs).
Grāe aē.	

STORIES OF OLD GREECE.

GREECE AND THE GREEKS.

LONG ago, when the earth was new and people had not lived long enough upon it to find out how little they really knew about it, there lived in a far-away country a simple and childlike people. The country was a small one, but it was very beautiful, and the people who lived in it loved it dearly. They loved its rugged mountains, green valleys, and swift-flowing streams. It is the little country which we call Greece; but then it was called Hellas.

The wide blue sea is on the east, and south, and west of Greece, but on the north there is a great wall of mountains, which separates it from the rest of Europe.

The Greeks have told many strange and beautiful stories about their country and its people. They were a strong and active people, and were fond of being out of doors and of all out-of-door amusements. Thus they

became famous athletes. They could run swiftly, and could jump, wrestle, and use the bow and arrow with great accuracy and skill. They rode well on horse-back, and were very proud of their queer, clumsy chariots, and of their ability to curb their fiery steeds.

Their chariots were clumsy because they were very heavy ; but the finer ones were as beautiful as the Greeks could make them with carvings, gold, and jewels.

They used their chariots in war, and in their chariot races. In war the Greeks were brave, and their heroes were the men who were the best warriors. They loved beautiful colors, fine pictures and statues ; and their houses and temples were grander than any we have to-day. They were more skilful than we are in the art of carving statues from ivory and marble.

They made statues of their heroes and their gods.

It is strange that people who were so wise in many things knew nothing of the great God who made the earth. They thought that there were many gods, and that these gods lived in a beautiful place on the top of Mount Olympus. They thought that their gods were very much like themselves, but were wiser, and far more beautiful. Zeus was the greatest of the gods, and the Greeks believed that they heard his voice in the



DEMETER.

thunder. His wife, Hera, was pleasant to look upon, yet she had very unpleasant manners, and an unfortunate habit of turning into an animal any one who displeased her.

Poseidon lived in a beautiful palace at the bottom of the sea. With his trident he caused mighty tempests, or stilled the angry waves. He was carried from place to place in a shell chariot drawn by fish-horses, which bounded so swiftly over the water that the chariot scarcely touched its waves. Demeter looked after the fields, and brought good harvests to the people. Athena taught them to be wise in many ways. She taught them to do all kinds of hard work ; and Helios, the sun-god, drove his golden chariot across the sky every morning. There were many other gods of whom the Greeks asked help, and of whom they told the stories which we shall read.

HELIOS AND CLYTIE.

HELIOS, the beautiful, was the sun-god, whom the Greeks loved and honored. He was tall, and as straight



HELIOS.

as an arrow. He had blue eyes, and hair which fell in golden curls over his shoulders. His limbs were strong, and the muscles of his arms stood out in rounded curves

like the arms of an athlete. The sun-god was indeed a famous horseman. Every morning he drove his golden chariot across the sky. This was not an easy thing to do, for the horses were as wild as the Arabian horses of Ilderim. Ah, but they were beautiful, with their flowing manes and tails, their flashing eyes, graceful limbs, and silky coats! Fire flashed from their nostrils as they ran, and no horses have ever been swifter than those which drew the golden chariot.

Helios was proud of them, and indeed, he should have been very happy. But sometimes he grew quite tired of his pleasant task. The Hours, Minutes, and Seconds who went with him were often very tiresome, because they always said the same things. To be sure, Helios never grew tired of his beautiful sister, Eos, who drew aside the crimson curtains of the dawn. When he was ready to start, Eos bade him good-by with a pleasant smile.

At the end of the day's journey, Helios was received by the sea-nymphs, who took care of the horses, and prepared a soft couch on which he rested until the next day.

The beginning of the journey was very pleasant to Helios. The birds sang a greeting, the brooks and rivers made music for him, and the people down upon the green earth sang songs in his praise. Everybody

and everything loved him. Even the little ants, toiling away at their tiny sand mountains, watched for his coming. Helios should have been happy and contented at all times ; but he was not. Sometimes his discontent darkened his bright face, so that people on the earth were frightened. In vain they sang their songs of praise and inquired, "Where is Helios?" No one could tell.

"Far down the gentle stream of Ocean" lived the stern old god Oceanus and his daughter Clytie. She was one of the sea-nymphs who danced and sang at evening when Helios returned. She was a bright and playful little nymph. All day long she ran laughing and dancing through her father's coral halls, and made his heart soften, even in his darkest moods ; for Oceanus was very stern and unkind at times.

Helios was never too tired to talk to Clytie. They were the best of friends, and had many pleasant times together. Helios told her what had happened during the day, in the sky, or down upon the earth. Sometimes his stories were bright, happy ones, but often Helios told of terrible wars and brave warriors killed by cruel lances ; and then Clytie would put her hands over her ears and beg Helios to tell of other things more pleasant.

One day Helios promised to take Clytie with him in

the chariot. "If you are not afraid, you shall go every day," he said. Clytie said that she would not be afraid with such a brave driver.

But Oceanus could not spare Clytie, and would not give his consent. "Ah, well, Leucothea will go, even though her father consent not," said Helios.

Helios had told Clytie about the little princess Leucothea, whose father was king of an eastern country. Why should Clytie stay at home and miss the pleasure which Leucothea would enjoy? Clytie made up her mind to go without asking her father. So she called her dolphins, and bade them bring her pink-lined chariot; and away they dashed through the waves and surf. They stopped at a little rock island where the sea-nymphs played their happy games. By and by the golden chariot of Helios appeared far away in the east. Clytie's heart beat fast. She watched the sun-god as he drew nearer and nearer. She was sure that he would take her as he had promised. But Helios did not stop. Perhaps he had forgotten Clytie, or it may be that he dared not offend Oceanus. Helios drove right along, not deigning even so much as a glance toward the little rock island. Perhaps he did not know that a sad and disappointed little maiden was watching so patiently.

Day after day Clytie waited in vain for the fickle

sun-god. "He has forgotten me, — he will not keep his promise," she sobbed ; and she threw herself upon the rocks, and refused the comfort offered by her gentle sister nymphs.

Clytie stayed so long on the rocks that her feet became rooted in the sand, and her golden hair was changed into the yellow rays of the sunflower, which still turns toward the bright chariot of Helios.

PHAETHON.

PHAETHON was a tall, handsome youth, with flashing eyes and a dauntless spirit. He was known as the most daring among his companions, for no deed, however reckless it might be, was too dangerous for Phaethon to undertake. And yet, with all his bravery he was a great boaster, often bringing ridicule upon himself because of his vanity.

One day he was boasting about his father, Helios. Now, as every one knows, a great and wise father may not always have a son as wise and great as himself, and Phaethon's friends taunted him with this; and even declared that his father was not a god at all.

This was too much for Phaethon's pride, and rushing to his mother, Clymene, he earnestly besought her to tell him the truth, and assure him of his noble birth.

"My son," said Clymene, "thou art too apt to boast, and wilt surely come to grief in consequence; but of a truth, thou art the son of thy father, Helios, and to convince thyself, go and ask him."

Now Phaethon had never seen his father. In order that he might be self-dependent he had been brought

up far away from the palace to which his mother intended to take him when he had proven himself worthy. Clymene told him how difficult he would find the journey; but Phaethon was willing to overcome all difficulties, and he started at once. On the way he had many adventures, but at last found himself in a far Eastern country, which has for its boundary a wall of high mountains.

On the top of the highest mountain was the palace of the sun-god, a palace of far greater beauty than any which Phaethon had ever seen, and its brightness dazzled him. It had golden columns, great silver doors, and its ceilings were of ivory. On the walls were vast pictures of the sky, the rivers, oceans, and lands of the earth; and most wonderful of all were the pictures of all the people of the earth in their cities and villages.

But Phaethon did not stop to look at these beautiful things, or to listen to the sweet music of many fountains. He entered the hall in which Helios was preparing to take his daily journey; and walking straight up to the sun-god exclaimed, "O light of the boundless world, my father, claim me, I pray thee, as thy son, for such I surely am."

Helios bade him approach, and kissing him, exclaimed, "Thou art most welcome, my son. I have

looked long for thy coming, and to prove my love for thee, thou shalt ask what thou wilt, and it shall be granted thee."

At this moment the goddess of the morning, Eos, drew aside a beautiful crimson veil, and the chariot and horses were brought in. It was a glorious moment. The attendants burst into a chorus of glad music; the air became sweet with perfume, as from many flowers, and the spirited horses stamped impatiently at the delay.

Phaethon looked at the horses, and then at the dazzling chariot. Hephaestus had given it to Helios. With its wheels of gold and spokes of silver, which sparkled and flashed with many-colored jewels, it was charming. Phaethon became possessed of a great desire to drive the fire-flashing horses. "Let me but drive them for a day," he asked; "then shall I prove to thee how worthy a son am I for so great a father.' Then, bending low, he exclaimed, "Grant this one wish, I pray thee."

"I cannot grant thee that wish, my son. The horses can be safely driven only by Helios himself. Ask anything else."

But Phaethon, foolish lad, insisted, and as Helios had promised, he at length yielded, after trying in vain to turn Phaethon from his intention.



PHAETHON.

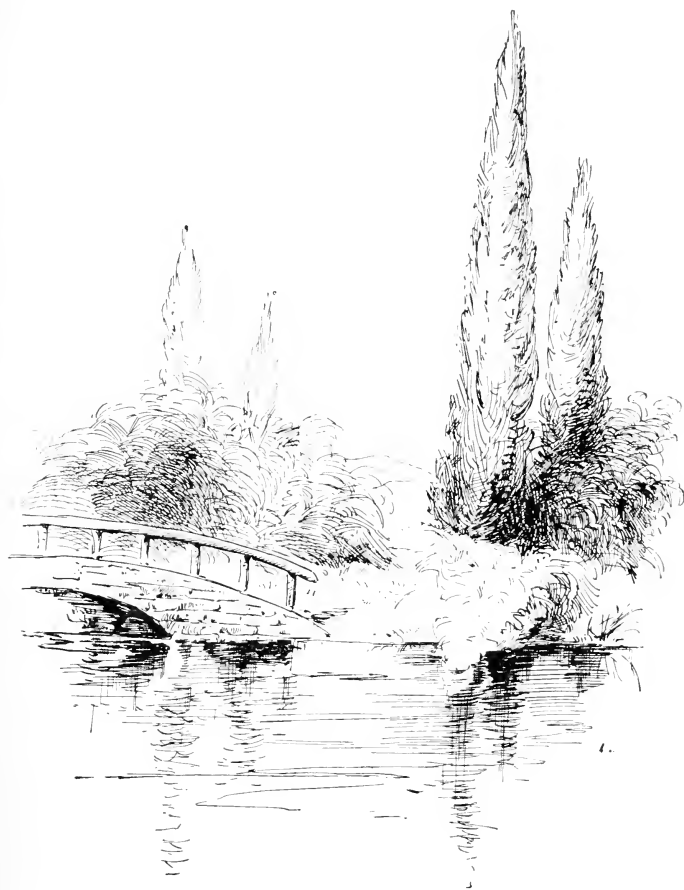
Phaethon was very stubborn. He longed for the glory of having driven the sun-chariot for a day, and with this desire strong in his heart, he forgot to respect the wishes of an older and wiser person.

When he started upon his journey the chorus ceased ; the Hours, Minutes, and Seconds looked sad ; Spring dropped her flowers ; Summer threw down her garlands of roses, and Autumn's rosy face turned pale, while old Winter's icicles began to melt.

At first it was fine sport holding the reins over the fire-breathing horses. Helios had wisely allowed them their own pace, which was far from slow ; but Phaethon urged them on until they were rushing at a terrific speed quite out of their regular course. At length they came so near to the poisonous Scorpio, that Phaethon was in danger of being grasped by the great claws, and dropping the reins in his fright, he clung desperately to the chariot.

The horses plunged wildly on. They came so near to the earth that the oceans and rivers dried up, the mountains began to smoke, and the people cried to Zeus for help.

When Zeus saw what had been so foolishly done, he became very angry, and sent a bolt which hurled Phaethon from the chariot, down, down — his hair and clothes on fire — into a river which hid him in its cool waters.



POPLAR-TREES.

A sad ending was this to Phaethon's great day. But, sadder still, two maidens who were standing on the bank of the river, saw in the boy-comet their brother

Phaethon. They could not help him ; they could only stand and weep, and they wept so long that their feet became rooted to the ground, and they turned into poplar-trees. If you will listen near one of these trees you may still hear the gentle sighing of the poplar-sisters for their brother.

Phaethon's friend Cygnos saw the fall, and was deeply grieved. Day after day he mourned, and each day his neck grew longer as he lingered near the water and looked into its waves. He became a swan and spent his time floating on the river, always looking for, but never finding Phaethon. Only once did he call Phaethon, and that was when he was dying.

APOLLO, THE BEAUTIFUL.

LONG ago, on the rocky island of Delos, a little baby opened his blue eyes to the light of day.

It was so joyful an event that the birds sang, flowers sprang from the ground in full bloom, and the little wood-nymphs danced merrily. A great joy came into the hearts of men, and the earth was full of gladness.

Apollo, the beautiful, was born. He it was who brought health and prosperity to men, and who caused the flowers to bloom and the grains to ripen, until the fields lay smiling in warmth and gladness, and the shepherds upon the hillsides broke forth into songs of joy.

A beautiful goddess, Themis, gave Apollo a bow, and a quiver full of shining arrows, and better than these, a lyre. Then she gave the little Apollo some of the nectar and ambrosia which is the food of the gods.

No sooner had he eaten it than he began to grow taller and taller, until he had become a handsome youth. How strong, and noble, and brave he was!

Taking his bow and his lyre, he said, "These shall be my friends. I will teach the will of my father Zeus to

men. I will teach them the songs of nature, and they shall sing more sweetly than the birds. I will teach them to see new beauty in the hills and fields. I will foretell to them the future, and they shall become wise like the gods."

So Apollo started forth to do this noble work for men. They began to grow wiser and better. The people honored him by making beautiful temples, and by growing skilful in the arts of poetry and music.

Apollo was well loved by the gods; but he once offended Zeus, and the anger of the greatest of the gods was intense. Apollo's dear friend, Aesculapius, the god of medicine, had been killed by the thunderbolts of the giant Cyclops. Apollo killed the giant, and Zeus had no one to forge his thunderbolts.

For this offence, Zeus sent Apollo to Thessaly, and, taking away his power, made him a servant to Admetus, the king of that country.

So Apollo became a simple shepherd. But even on the hills, dressed in rough skins, the god lost none of his beauty. He played on his lyre so skilfully that the king called him to his palace, to play for his beautiful wife, Alcestis.

Apollo and Admetus became firm friends. Apollo loved the king so dearly that he could not bear to think of the time when Admetus should grow old and die.

He begged the Fates to make him immortal, so that he would never die. "He shall be like thee, immortal Apollo, but some one must die in his stead," they said.

One day Admetus grew ill; and Alcestis, bending over him, said, "Thou shalt not die, Admetus, I will die for thee. 'Life is sweet,' and thou shalt live to enjoy its sweetness."

So the noble Alcestis died, and the home of Admetus was full of mourning.

When Heracles, the strong, came to visit Admetus, he found a sad state of affairs. In spite of his grief, Admetus tried to make his guest feel welcome. After hearing the sad story, Heracles went away.

He soon returned, bringing a lady whose face Admetus could not see.

"Wilt thou care for this noble lady, Admetus?" said Heracles.

At first Admetus thought that it was a stranger; but when he found that it was his own dear wife, his joy was as great as his grief had been. Heracles had brought Alcestis back after he had fought with and conquered the messenger of Aides.

While Apollo was caring for the flocks of Admetus, his lyre was seldom silent; and so well did he play that the tall reeds and grasses trembled with pleasure, and softly echoed the sweet strains.

HYACINTHUS.

ONE day, upon a green hillside, Apollo saw another shepherd lad, who was playing upon a pipe, and making music which sounded like the sighing of the pine-trees. Apollo drew near and stood before the shepherd. "What is thy name, noble youth?" he asked.

The shepherd was dazzled by the brightness of the god, but answered simply, "Hyacinthus."

"Thy name is well suited to thee. Let me play upon thy pipe," said Apollo.

Hyacinthus, although astonished at the great beauty of Apollo, was even more amazed at the sweetness of his music, for no mortal had ever heard such music before.

The shepherd lad was charmed into silence, as were also the birds and bees. while even the little brook, which had been rippling down hill, paused in a quiet pool to listen.

Apollo finally returned the pipe, saying frankly, "I like you, Hyacinthus. We will be friends. and you shall go with me to the palace of King Admetus."



THE DISK THROWER.

Hyacinthus' eyes sparkled; he longed to go, but when he thought of his sheep, he said, "But what would become of my sheep? I must not leave them. No, no, Apollo; I cannot go with you!"

"Noble youth, I love you the better because you prefer duty to pleasure; and since you cannot come with me, I will come to you. To-morrow I will come again."

Apollo came again; and for many happy days they played and talked, and learned to love each other, as only the best of friends can do.

One day they were playing a game of quoits. They were both very eager and earnest, Hyacinthus wishing that Apollo might win, Apollo wishing for the success of Hyacinthus. Apollo picked up the discus, and made a splendid throw. He would have won, but a sad thing happened. The West Wind, who, as you know, is a wild and gloomy fellow, had grown jealous of the friendship. No doubt he thought that he could make them quarrel. He blew the discus so that it bounded back and hit Hyacinthus on the forehead. Apollo rushed forward and tenderly lifted the wounded head from the ground, but it drooped like a broken flower. Apollo wept and moaned, for poor Hyacinthus was dead. He could play no more with his beloved friend.

“Ah, Hyacinthus, would that I could have died for thee! My lyre shall tell of thy sad fate, and I will cause thee to be remembered, for thou wert indeed a noble friend.”

So where the bright blood of Hyacinthus had fallen, Apollo caused to spring up the beautiful flower which bears his name, — the hyacinth.

APOLLO AND THE PYTHON.

APOLLO carried a silver bow and a quiver full of golden arrows, which were not only very beautiful, but also very dangerous. They had been known to slay whole armies, and even to dry up the rivers and lakes into which they had fallen. But you must not suppose that he was an angry and an unjust god; he was as brave as he was beautiful, and as kind as he was brave.

One day he saw that the people down upon the green earth were very unhappy about something. This made him sad, for he wished always to see them happy and cheerful; so he came down to see what troubled them. He walked through a green valley, where a river ran laughing toward the sea, and stopped near a house in the doorway of which sat a little boy sobbing bitterly.

When Apollo asked him the cause of his grief, he pointed to a far-away blue mountain, and said, between his sobs, that a great dragon lived in the mountain caves. At night, when the people slept, this dragon came silently down, breathed upon them his poisoned breath, and in the morning they did not awaken. He



APOLLO.

told Apollo that his dear mamma was yet asleep; that he had been calling to her, but she did not answer.

Apollo shot a golden arrow into the room, then, patting the boy's shining curls, he said, "Laugh and be happy, little one; the dragon shall never come again."

Then the little boy heard his mother's voice calling to him very softly; and clapping his hands with delight, he ran into the house.

Apollo knew that his old enemy, the python, was doing all the mischief, and he determined to kill the monster. This was not an easy task, even for Apollo; for the serpent hid himself in the deep recesses of the mountain caves during the daytime, and he had a sly habit of making himself invisible. Apollo grasped his bow firmly, and chose three of his straightest arrows.

He climbed the steep, craggy side of the mountain, and looked carefully into its many caves. At last he found one which was larger than the others. He shot a swift and silent arrow back into the darkness, and not without result; for there, with a sparkling roof of precious stones above him, lay the python, coiled in an ugly heap. He was just ready to spring at the intruder, but Apollo's arrow pinned the flat head to the earth.

The python lashed about in its fury, and filled the cave with its fiery and poisonous breath; but Apollo

could not be harmed by it. Again and again his careful aim took effect, and at last the ugly, quivering mass became silent. The python was dead, and Apollo went on his journey again.

How happy the people were! They sang songs in praise of Apollo; and over the cave where he had killed the python, they built a beautiful temple. They played many games in his honor, and these were called the Pythian games. There were chariot and foot races, quoit-throwing, wrestling, and the performing of many feats of strength by the young men. The winner of the games was called a victor, and was crowned with a wreath of laurel leaves, of which he was perhaps more proud than a king is of his golden crown.

Long ago, a great sculptor made a statue to be put in one of Apollo's temples. It proved to be a remarkable work of art, for no one had ever made so beautiful a statue before, and its excellence has never since been equalled. It was found many years after it had been made, not far from the great city of Rome, and was taken to the belvedere of the Vatican in that city. This fine statue is called the Apollo Belvedere, and represents the sun-god after he had shot the golden arrow into the python's cave. He seems proud and happy at the thought of having done a great deed for the people of the earth.

DAPHNE, THE DAWN-MAIDEN.

IN a beautiful palace, far up on Mount Olympus, lived Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, and her pretty little boy, Eros.



EROS.

Eros was a bright and winning little fellow; but since the truth must be told, he was mischievous, and often did harm by his thoughtless ways. His mother

had given him a bow and arrows, and Eros had become quite a skilful archer. Sometimes, however, he sent his arrows so carelessly that he wounded people without meaning to do so. The arrows were tiny, but the wounds which they made were difficult to heal.

One day Eros sat on the rim of a fountain, shooting at the pond-lilies, which seemed to be glancing up at him and filling the air with dainty perfume.

All at once, the water of the fountain shone like molten gold. Apollo, the god of light, stood beside it. When he saw what Eros was doing, he picked up the bundle of arrows, laughed, and carelessly threw them down, breaking several.

"Why, Eros," said Apollo, "are you playing with such warlike weapons? It is not strange that the butterflies and water-spiders have left the fountain to-day; they have saved their lives by so doing. How many pond-lilies have you killed, my son?"

"Put these toys away! By and by you shall have a real bow and arrows, like mine, which have just killed the python."

Not only had Apollo broken Eros' arrows, but he had wounded his pride, which was far worse for Eros to endure, and he was very angry. Picking up one of the broken arrows, he said, —

“Well, Apollo, your arrows may strike everything, but you shall some day be wounded by mine.”

Apollo laughed, and said that he was not afraid of such tiny weapons.

The fountain, on the rim of which Eros sat, was a very wonderful fountain. Its water dimpled and sparkled in the sunlight, looking so delicious and cool that all who saw it desired to partake of it. And for those who drank this water, a charm was wrought; for it made everybody happy and contented. Enemies became friends, and all cares were forgotten, for it was the fountain of Content.

There was another fountain, too, in Aphrodite's garden, which was filled with bitter water; and very unfortunate indeed was the one who drank of this water, for he became filled with unfriendly feelings toward everybody and everything. He began to dislike his best friends, and sought to do them injury. And this was the fountain of Discontent.

The angry Eros, bent upon punishing Apollo, dipped one arrow into the sweet water, and another into the bitter. Then he followed Apollo down into the beautiful Vale of Tempe, the home of the river-god, Peneus, and his little daughter, Daphne.

Daphne was exceedingly pretty, with eyes that shone like stars, dimpled and rosy cheeks, and a face

always full of sunshine. Perhaps that was because she and the sun-god were such good friends, for they talked together, and sang together, while they sat by the river-side. Apollo told his little friend about the terrible monsters which were sometimes seen from his golden chariot; about the Scorpio with its poisonous claws, and the Bull with its angry horns. When the eyes of the little girl grew round with fright, Apollo told her about the earth and of his own palace, with its gorgeous attendants. Daphne and Apollo had only the kindest of words for each other.

But Eros did a dreadful thing! He shot the bitter arrow at Daphne. It did not hurt badly, but it had the power of changing the feelings of friendship to those of dislike and distrust.

He shot the sweetened arrow at Apollo, so that he longed to have Daphne with him always, and even desired to take her away from her home in the Vale of Tempe. So he asked her to leave Peneus and go with him in the chariot.

Daphne was very angry that Apollo should ask her to leave the beautiful things which she loved, — her home, the birds, and her kind old father; and when the thought could no longer be endured, she turned and ran away.

Apollo followed, for he did not see that Daphne had

changed so quickly. They both ran swiftly; but Apollo was the swifter runner of the two, and would surely have overtaken Daphne, but she ran to the river-bank, and throwing up her arms, cried, "Oh, help me, Peneus, my father! I do not wish to leave you. Take me, and send Apollo away."

Peneus heard her, and caused the ground to open. Daphne's feet began to sink into the soft earth. Her outstretched arms became stiff and strong, and her tender flesh and white garments were changed into the trunk and bark of a tree. Instead of her golden hair and pink cheeks, Apollo saw only the green leaves and pink flowers of the laurel. He was deeply grieved. He had not time to ask Daphne the cause of her strange actions before she was lost to sight.

Apollo plucked some of the leaves and twined them about his harp, saying sadly, "Ah, Daphne, if you will not be my friend, you shall be my tree. Boreas shall never change the color of your leaves: they shall always be green; and when great deeds are done, none are more fit than these to crown the victor."

And ever since then the laurel has been sacred to Apollo; and heroes and great poets are crowned with wreaths of laurel even to this day.

HERMES AND APOLLO.

LONG ago, in a cave of the beautiful blue hills of the Lotus land, a little bright-eyed baby lay fast asleep. He slept as softly and as sweetly in his rock cradle as the little now-a-day babies do upon their downy pillows; for the bees hummed his lullaby, and the birds and mountain brooks sang his cradle songs. The cave was filled with sweet scents from flowery fields, and no passer-by disturbed the little sleeper, Hermes.

Hermes was the son of Zeus; and being the child of so great a father, was of course quite different from other children. Indeed, he was a very wonderful baby; for when he was but four days old, he crept out of the cave, then stood up, and after a few trials began walking along the soft sand, and by and by he began to talk. He talked to the birds, insects, and flowers, and they talked to him, although in a different language. Everything was new and beautiful, and Hermes was very happy. He clapped his dimpled hands when he saw a tortoise creeping slowly toward the water.

"Stop," said he. "Where are you going, little tortoise? I will go too."

But the tortoise did not wish to talk, nor did he care for company ; but he stopped and blinked his small bright eyes at the blue-eyed little boy.

“ Ah, you are silent now,” cried Hermes ; “ but by and by you shall sing more sweetly than the birds.”

But the tortoise had no time to think about the matter, for Hermes killed it, and taking its shell, stretched skin across it, then stretched strings across the skin. So the poor, silent little tortoise lost its life that its shell might be used in making a musical instrument.

Hermes made each string give a different tone ; and, much pleased with his work, he began to sing and to play. Everything else was silent as the sound of the lyre trembled in the air ; and as the soft, sweet music attracted their attention, the birds hopped about Hermes, and the animals drew near to listen. He sang of the ocean, with its white crested waves ; of the sandy beach and pink-lined shells. But he sang best of all about his great father, Zeus, and of his beautiful mother, Maia.

By and by he grew tired of this pleasant occupation, and, looking about him, saw on the far-away hills the white oxen of Apollo, quietly grazing. He thought that it would be great sport to drive them from hill to hill. He knew he could show them where the



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greenest grasses grew. Apollo had so many oxen, surely he would not miss a few. Thus did Hermes try to ease his mind, for although no one had told him that it would not be right to drive the oxen away, he really felt that it would not be treating Apollo fairly.

After looking at the oxen for some time, he decided to help himself. Sly little Hermes! In order that Apollo should not find which way they had gone, he tied twigs to his own soft feet and to those of the oxen, then drove them by a crooked path to a far-away cave. He did not feel quite comfortable about it when he came to his cave and went back into his cradle, — for he was still the baby Hermes, although so sly and cunning. He did not feel quite right about the oxen. His conscience troubled him. He could not sleep. He began to wish he had not taken them.

Apollo was very angry when he found his oxen missing. His usually good temper was dreadfully ruffled, and he went about in a great hurry, asking everybody about the lost animals; but no one had seen them.

At length he came to an old man who had watched Hermes as he drove the cattle away. At first the old man refused to tell anything; but when Apollo promised him fruitful vines and good harvests, the old man was so pleased that he told Apollo what he had seen, —

how a little boy with a staff in his hands had driven them away over the hills.

Now, Apollo knew who the little boy was, and went at once to the cave where lay Hermes, pretending to be asleep. When Apollo asked for his oxen, Hermes covered his eyes and ears, and refused to talk; but Apollo coaxed and threatened, and at last said some cross things. He went to Zeus, who bade Hermes to come with Apollo and settle the dispute. So the angry sun-god and the naughty Hermes went together to the great hall where all the gods and goddesses were waiting, drinking nectar and eating ambrosia, while the pretty Hebe served them politely.

How the gods and goddesses laughed when Apollo said that the little baby-boy, Hermes, had stolen his cattle! But when Zeus said, "Hermes, you must give back the oxen, and put them upon the hillside pasture again," there was no other way to do; so the cattle were brought back, and when Apollo again visited the cave of Hermes, there was peace and friendship between them.

Hermes showed Apollo his lyre, and when Apollo swept his hand across the strings, even the little waves on the blue sea stopped chasing one another to listen; then they too sang the same song, and they sing it to this day. Hermes opened his eyes in wonder, then

exclaimed, "Apollo, you are truly the god of light and music. You may keep the lyre. It speaks only to those who know its tones ; to all others it is but noise."

Apollo did not wish to take the lyre without giving something in return, so he gave to Hermes a wand which had the power of making friends of those who had been enemies, and of settling disputes. It is called the Caduceus. Apollo also gave to Hermes the care of his flocks ; and if you will look for them, you can see the white oxen of Apollo in his sunny pastures, for Hermes is the wind, and the oxen are the clouds.

When Apollo had gone with his lyre, Hermes went out to try the wand. Finding two serpents fighting and lashing the ground with their slender tails, he touched them with the wand, and they twined themselves lovingly about it. Thus, even now, does Hermes heal all difficulties.

Zeus was greatly pleased with the peaceful ending of the quarrel. He made Hermes the trusted messenger of the gods, and gave him a winged cap and sandals.

BAUCIS AND PHILEMON.

HOW THE LINDENS AND THE OAKS GREW.

ALTHOUGH the home of Zeus was up above the cloud-capped mountains, in a beautiful country where there was perpetual sunshine, where fell neither drenching rains nor heavy snows, the great god often came down to the earth. Disguised as a mortal, he wandered to and fro, mingling with the people and feeling glad and sorry with them.

The people of Greece had very strange ideas about the earth in those far-away childish days. They knew all about their own fair country, for they had climbed its mountains and traversed its valleys; but beyond these were strange regions, about which they thought a great deal, although they knew but little.

They thought that the earth was flat, like a great shield; that their own country was in the centre; and that the home of the gods was Mount Olympus, which rose above them, like the central point on the great brass shields which you have seen.

They thought that the great River-Ocean flowed around the earth, and poured its waters into the Ægean Sea and the seas about which they knew. North of them was the beautiful land of the Hyperboreans, in which country were the happiest of people, who spent their time in singing and dancing, laughing and dreaming, — a careless, idle people, doing no work, never growing old, and always free from sickness or war. A poet has written one of the songs of these joyous Hyperboreans.

South of Greece was a country quite as beautiful, and a people quite as happy, — the god-favored Ethiopians. On the west were the Isles of the Blessed, where good people were taken by the gods, and where they lived forever in happiness. So you see the Greeks knew very little about the countries around them; for we have learned that these are very strange and useless beliefs about the earth.

When we think that other places are so much better than our own, and that happiness can be found everywhere else than in our own little corner of the world, we, like the Greeks, are believers in a land of the Hyperboreans, into which we cannot expect to enter.

Zeus often visited these strange and blissful regions; and he chose Hermes for a companion, because he had the winged cap and sandals, and could travel



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rapidly. Then, too, Hermes was a famous storyteller; and who does not love to listen to a good story? Hermes' stories were his own. They were not always true; but they pleased the dignified and stately Zeus, nevertheless.

One day Hermes and Zeus had walked for a long distance in search of the Elysian Plains. They were weary and footsore, and they had travelled over steep mountains and through sunny valleys without having found a path. They had made frequent inquiries, but each person whom they asked had told them to go in a different direction. So they decided to give up the search until the next day; and just as Helios was driving far down in the west, they came to a village, nestled close beneath a high mountain.

Hermes and Zeus were dressed like mortals; their clothes were dusty and torn, and they looked like very ordinary travellers. At the outskirts of the village, they came to a fine large house with marble pillars, around which were great shady trees inviting rest. Hermes said, "Let us go in here. This will be a nice place to rest." So they walked up to the arched portico, and would have entered, but a richly dressed man came out and bade them begone.

Again and again they sought rest at different houses, but with no better success. In this manner they passed

through the village. At length they came to a little tumble-down house with which the West Wind had played many a rough game. Two old people were sitting on a rude bench by the door; and at sight of the travellers, they both arose and welcomed them gladly. They gave up their bench; the housewife brought water in a wooden bowl; while the man unfastened their sandals, and helped them to bathe their faces, hands, and feet. Inside the house the good lady spread a coarse cloth upon the table, and began to get supper. To the wearied and hungry travellers, all this was very pleasant indeed. To be treated as if they were long-expected guests was as delightful to Hermes and Zeus then as it is to mortals now.

They began to talk to the old man, who seemed cheerful and happy in spite of his poverty.

“To whom do we owe this pleasure?” asked Zeus.

“This is Baucis, my wife,” and “That is Philemon, my husband,” they both answered, almost in the same breath.

They were too polite to ask who the strangers were or where they were going. They talked of the harvests and about the games in which some of the young men of the village had taken part, and had been victorious. Then they went into the house, with its one room, its rickety old table, and shaky chairs. Baucis began to say

how sorry she was that she had nothing better to offer. She had only cakes, grapes, and milk ; and these did not seem very much for two hungry people. Baucis and Philemon said that they were not at all hungry, and urged their guests to eat all that there was in the dishes. And how they did eat ! The dishes were nearly empty ; one cake and the last bunch of grapes remained, and there was no more milk in the pitcher, when Hermes politely asked for more. Baucis tipped the pitcher to pour out the last drop, when, lo ! it was full to the brim of rich and sparkling nectar, while each humble dish was turned into a glittering vessel of gold, filled with rare dainties, such as Baucis and Philemon had never dreamed of. They were now invited to the feast, and they fell upon their knees, for they discovered that their visitors were the gods themselves.

“ Good Baucis and Philemon,” said Zeus. “ ye have shown us the true beauty of hospitality, and ye are deserving of gifts worthy of those whom ye have served. Rise and follow us.”

The gods led the way to the top of a hill, and there, pausing, bade Baucis and Philemon look back.

The whole scene had changed. They saw no longer the village with its white houses among the trees, but, instead, a blue and sparkling lake. In the midst of this lake, on an island, stood their old home ; and as

they looked, it began to change. Slowly its crumbling walls rose into tall and stately columns, and the old roof became the pediment of a beautiful temple. On the pediment were statues of Zeus and the gods.

“This shall be your home,” said Zeus. “It is a temple sacred to Zeus, and it shall be taken care of by those who know well how to care for the needs of others. Is there a wish you would have granted?”

“Great father Zeus,” said Baucis, “we pray that we may never part, but that we may go together to the land of the afternoon.”

One day Baucis and Philemon were standing before the temple; and as they looked lovingly into each other’s eyes, Baucis said, “Ah Philemon, would that we could remain here always!”

She had scarcely spoken these words, when Philemon was changed into a beautiful tree; and looking down at her feet, she saw that she herself was changing. So Baucis became a beautiful linden, and Philemon a strong and sturdy oak. For years they stood before the temple, and with each passing breeze, they whispered loving words to each other.

RHOECUS.

AT the foot of the cloud-capped mountains in Greece was a forest, in which grew laurel, the linden, the oak, and many other kinds of trees, as dear to the Greeks as they are to us.

The Greeks loved to wander along the paths of the green forests beneath the spreading branches of its great trees ; and they enjoyed this all the more, because they believed that each tree was the home of a Dryad. and that in each brook and river lived the water-nymphs.

Nymphs and Dryads were seldom seen by mortal eyes ; but did not these simple people know that they were there ? They could hear their voices in the rustling of the leaves, in the rippling of the brooks, and in the rush of water in the rivers.

The nymphs of the rivers and streams were the Naiads ; those of the ocean the Nereids ; and those of the wood the Dryads and Hamadryads. They must have had happy times in their forest homes, with the birds and bees for messengers. The Naiads and

Nereids lived always ; but, sad to say, the life of the poor little Dryads ended when the tree died.

One day a young Grecian lad named Rhoecus was walking through the forest on his way to join the sports in which his friends were engaged. His merry face and bright eyes had caught the sunshine which flickered through the leaves. He was singing gayly, stopping now and then to pick a flower, or watch a shy little spider spinning her silken trap.

At length he came to a very old oak-tree, the mossy trunk of which was falling apart, so that a strong wind would have blown it down. Rhoecus thought of the many summers it had seen ; and peering into the great hollow trunk, he wondered whether the Dryad were at home. He felt sorry for the old tree, and propped it up, saying as he did so, "There, old tree. the West Wind shall not yet have a chance to laugh at your downfall."

As Rhoecus turned to go, he thought that he heard some one calling to him very softly. He listened. Yes ; some one was surely calling to him. "Rhoecus, Rhoecus !" The voice was very sweet ; and Rhoecus, searching for its owner, saw up among the green branches a little maiden. "Are you calling me ?" he asked very gently.

"Yes, Rhoecus, you have been very kind and have

saved my life ; for do you not see these green branches growing out of the old trunk of my tree ? Ask what you wish. It is in my power to help you."

Rhoecus thought of many things which he would like to possess, or to be. He had seen the warriors with their horses and chariots, their gleaming shields and flashing swords.

"I should like to be a great warrior, little Dryad," said he.

"Ah, Rhoecus, to fight bravely is a great thing ; but after you are dead, men will simply say of you, 'He fought well.' Think again. Is that the best wish ? Would you not rather live nobly for others than die nobly for fame ?"

"That is a better wish," said Rhoecus. "Make me good and true, like yourself. Come with me and be my friend and helper always. Then can I be true and good."

"I cannot make you good ; only Rhoecus can do that. But if you will come here an hour before sunset, I will tell you about the Nymphs and Dryads ; and although I cannot make you good, I will make you wise. To be good and wise is to be like a god," said the Dryad.

Rhoecus, after promising to return, went on his way in a very happy mood. At the gate of the city he found his friends, who were playing just outside the

city wall; and as he was a very good player, they welcomed him gladly. He was a strong, swift runner, and could throw the discus with greater skill than any of his companions. He became so eager in trying to win that he forgot his promise to the Dryad. The hours flew faster than the swallows.

All at once a bee began to buzz about Rhoecus' head. It flew around and around, until he became quite angry, saying, as he brushed at it roughly, "Does it take me for a rose?" He hurt the little bee, and it flew slowly away; and as Rhoecus glanced after it, he noticed that Helios had reached the highest mountain peaks in Thessaly. Then came the thought of his promise. What if he were too late? He dropped the discus and ran, until, all out of breath, he reached the old oak-tree.

He looked up among the twisted branches. No gentle glance from the little Dryad met his own; but as he peered into the shadows, he heard the low voice again.

"Oh, Rhoecus! You did not keep your promise; and you hurt my little messenger, the bee. I cannot come to you now, for only gentle eyes may look upon us. I would be a friend to Rhoecus kind and thoughtful; but to the careless, thoughtless Rhoecus, I cannot come."

“Come back, little Dryad ! I will be kind next time. I will remember next time,” cried Rhoecus.

“No, Rhoecus. You must learn to be true to yourself and to your promises. He who does a little wrong thoughtlessly will do a greater. Good-bye.”

Sadly and thoughtfully Rhoecus wandered homeward, and as he passed beneath them, the trees seemed to whisper, “Oh, Rhoecus, thoughtless Rhoecus !” and the little stars and the great, kind moon seemed to say, “You must learn to think for others, Rhoecus ; then you will be good and happy too.”

ARACHNE, THE LITTLE SPINNER.

ATHENE, the goddess of wisdom, taught the Grecian people the useful arts, and they honored her by giving to her the care of one of their fairest cities, Athens. In this beautiful city they built the Parthenon and dedicated it to Athene. In the temple they placed a statue of the goddess. It was made of ivory and gold, and its robes were spun, woven, and embroidered by the fairest maidens in Greece.

The Greek maidens all knew how to spin and embroider. They said that Athene taught them. It would have been wrong to think otherwise.

One day a Grecian maiden sat spinning beneath an olive-tree on the shore of the blue Ægean Sea. She was a pretty picture. Her hair was like spun gold, and her face was very fair to look upon. She held her head high, and turned it somewhat haughtily when a sly little nymph, who had been watching, asked her about her work.

The little maid was Arachne, the most skilful spinner in Greece. None could equal her in the weaving of

beautiful webs ; and her fame had gone abroad, for the webs which Arachne wove and embroidered with her nimble fingers were sent far away, to be worn by the great people of other lands.

Everybody praised the little maid so lavishly that they quite turned her head. It was unfortunate indeed that a maiden so charming in most respects should not be agreeable in all ; but the foolish little Arachne was so much given to boasting of herself and of her skill that she was at times far from agreeable. At such times the little nymphs, who stole softly near to watch her as her slender fingers flew deftly to and fro, ran back to their vines and streams, while her friends grew weary and left her alone.

One day Arachne made a foolish boast. She declared that she excelled even Athene herself.

“ O Arachne, Arachne, how wicked ! Why, Athene taught you all you know,” cried her friends.

But the vain little maiden shook her pretty head, saying, “ Athene taught me not. I taught myself.”

Arachne's friends were shocked. They went home at once, while the naughty Arachne, with a toss of her proud little head, went on spinning and spinning.

By and by a shadow fell across the snowy wool, and looking up, Arachne saw an old woman leaning on her staff.



ARACHNE.

“My daughter, I heard that remark. It was foolish; but you are young, and perchance were jesting. You do not mean to compare yourself with Athene?”

“Yes, I do,” said Arachne, still spinning.

“Then you have greatly offended the goddess, and should beg her pardon.”

“I do not care. Do you suppose that Athene could weave a mantle finer than this?” And Arachne held up a soft scarf, rich with Tyrian purple and gold. “Let Athene come and try, if she thinks she can do better. I will match my skill with hers.”

As Arachne said this, the cloak fell from the old woman’s shoulders, and the stately goddess Athene stood before her. But Arachne was not abashed. She refused to ask pardon, and insisted upon a trial of skill.

They met on the shores of the sea, while the sea-nymphs, the tritons, and Arachne’s friends watched anxiously. Never before had a mortal dared to vie with a goddess; and every one knew that, should Arachne fail, her punishment would be severe. So they watched, almost breathlessly, as the hands of the spinners deftly carded the soft, fine wool, then twisted it into threads. Then these threads were stretched on frames, and soon the shuttles flew back and forth as if by magic.

Athene wove into her web the colors of the rainbow,

and more beautiful pictures than mortal eyes had ever beheld. She made pictures of the gods, — Zeus seated on his throne, with the stately Hera, and all the gods and goddesses in attendance; Helios in his chariot; Proserpine with her garlands of flowers; and the sea-god, Poseidon, with his trident. There was truth and beauty in every line of Athene's web. Arachne's web was also beautiful, but it was not entirely truthful, for her pictures were those which showed the errors and failings of others.

When Athene's web was finished, Zephyrus bore it aloft, and stretched it across the sky in a beautiful arch. But Arachne's web grew darker and darker. She knew that she was beaten, but would not ask forgiveness of the now angry Athene, who struck the web and rent it. Arachne snatched the fragments, and would have strangled herself; but Athene said, "Ah, Arachne, there is no pleasure in working for others unless truth and beauty enter into all which we do. That which is done for self-praise is wrong. You shall live to warn people who boast of their skill rather than make it a means of doing good." Then she touched Arachne; and, sad to tell, her beautiful hair fell off, her body shrivelled, and she turned into a spider. But she still shows us how wonderful a web she wove in those days of long ago.

PSYCHE.

PSYCHE was the most beautiful maiden in Greece. So rare and wonderful was her beauty, and so sweet her temper, that everybody loved and praised her; and although there were many people who were unwise enough to express their opinions, even to the fair Psyche herself, she was not spoiled. She remained gentle and helpful, spinning and working in her father's palace.

Her fame went abroad, until at last the goddess Aphrodite heard of the Grecian maiden, whose beauty was said to excel even her own. She determined to punish Psyche for daring to be so beautiful, for Aphrodite was very jealous. Even since Paris had given her the golden apple, which bore the inscription, "For The Fairest," — and which Eris had thrown into the midst of a feast among the gods and goddesses, — Aphrodite had had no rival in beauty; and it angered her greatly that a mortal should dare comparison with her. So she called Eris, and bade him punish Psyche.

Eris took two vases, and filled one with sweet, and the other with bitter water from the two fountains in

Aphrodite's garden ; and finding Psyche fast asleep, he poured some of the bitter water on her lips, which were as pretty and as pink as an opening rosebud. In doing so, he touched Psyche with one of his arrows, and she awoke. He could not bear to harm the little maiden, so he poured all of the sweet water over her golden curls, so that Aphrodite's charm could do her no harm. Then he ran away.

But Aphrodite was cruel. She sent troubles into Psyche's home, and by and by Psyche found out that she was the cause ; and this so grieved her that she could not stay any longer where her presence brought harm to those she loved.

One night she stole softly away, and wandered off by herself upon a lonely mountain. She climbed its rugged sides until she was too weary to go farther, and sitting down to rest, fell asleep.

When Psyche awoke, she found herself in a beautiful garden. There were shady paths, sparkling fountains, and joyous songs from many birds. She wandered along one of the paths until she came to a beautiful palace. The steps were of pink and blue and white onyx. There were columns of onyx, with golden capitals and bases richly inlaid with gold. Before the door were hung rich draperies, which waved gently to and fro.

Psyche was charmed. While she was wondering who lived in the palace, a voice from an invisible some one said, "Fair lady, all that you see is yours. Enter, and be content."

Psyche went into the palace, and wandered, delighted, through all of its rooms. She stopped in the banqueting hall, where a feast was spread, which was served by unseen hands.

That evening as she sat alone, a pleasant voice again addressed her: "Fair Psyche, this is your home, and I am your friend. I will come often to talk with you, so that you shall never be lonely. But you must promise neither to try to see my face, nor to find out my name."

This was a strange request, but Psyche willingly promised. Many happy hours they spent in the gardens and in the halls of the palace. When Psyche heard the voice, always in the dusk of the evening, she sought not to find out whence it came.

But, at her birth, Psyche had received another gift than that of beauty. This was not a desirable one, and had been given by an envious old woman. It was the dangerous gift of curiosity. For a long time she satisfied this in finding out many new and wonderful things about the palace. But at length she began to wonder about her friend, and one evening she hid a

little lamp in one of the vases in the court. After talking with her invisible friend for some time, she stole softly forward and took the lamp from the vase. And whom do you think she saw? The rosy, blue-eyed little boy, Eros, who had taken this mode of getting Psyche out of the way of Aphrodite's anger.

But when he saw the light, he knew that Psyche trusted him no longer; and without a word, he turned and flew away from the palace.

Psyche ran swiftly after him, calling to him to come back: "Come back, Eros! I will trust you. I will be kind to you, and we shall still be friends!"

But Eros would not return. Psyche ran far down the mountain side; but though she wandered about for a long time, she searched in vain, for she could find no trace of her little friend. At length she came to the temple of Aphrodite; and hoping to gain the favor of the goddess by offering her service, she entered.

Aphrodite said that she would forgive Psyche, but that she must first prove herself worthy by doing some difficult tasks. She took Psyche into her store-room, where there were many large jars of mixed grains.

"You must separate the grains and put them into these smaller vases," said Aphrodite.

Psyche could never have done so great a task had it not been for the kindness of the tiny black ants, which

left their sand cities and came to help her. So that at night, when Aphrodite came back, the task was done.

Yet another task Psyche performed by the help of the river-god, — that of gathering the golden fleece from a flock of wild sheep.

A third and more difficult task remained. Psyche's courage almost failed when Aphrodite bade her go to the regions of Aides in the Under-world, and ask Proserpine for a box of precious ointment. Proserpine, you know, was the princess who ruled for six months down in Aides' kingdom, because she ate the six pomegranate seeds, poor child! and during the other six months, she gladdened the earth and her mother, Demeter, with her smiles.

The way to Aides' kingdom was difficult indeed. It was guarded by Cerberus, a three-headed monster; and there was a dark river, the Styx, across which Psyche was sure she could not pass. But when she arrived at the cave where the dog Cerberus lived, she found the three heads asleep, and gliding swiftly by, soon stood on the river's brink.

"Who are you?" asked the dark ferryman, Charon.

"I am Psyche, and am sent with a message to Proserpine. I beg you, good Charon, do not delay, but ferry me across."

So Charon ferried Psyche across the Styx, and she



PSYCHE.

soon found herself in Proserpine's glittering palace. They made her welcome, and bade her partake of the feast which was spread beneath the dark arches of a splendid hall. Psyche did not tarry. She begged the ointment for the lady, Aphrodite, which Proserpine gave gladly, only saying, "Do not open the box, Psyche. Be sure that it be kept carefully closed."

Psyche promised, and hastened to return. Again she passed the dark river and the sleeping Cerberus in safety, and would have returned to Aphrodite with the ointment, if curiosity, her most fatal gift, had not again conquered. She longed to see what the precious ointment was like, and lifting the lid, peeped in.

At once a drowsiness took possession of her. She fell into a deep sleep from which she did not awaken until Eros found her. Shaking some drops of sweet water over her face, he said, "Foolish Psyche! You have again been punished; but I will stay with you now. We will carry this to Aphrodite, and I am sure she will forgive you."

So Eros and Psyche went together to Aphrodite, who had begun to feel quite ashamed of her selfishness, for she saw that Psyche really desired to be useful as well as beautiful. She gave Psyche some of the nectar, which made her immortal; and they were all very happy after that in their palace on Mount Olympus.

ORPHEUS, THE SWEET SINGER.

IN the sunny vales of Thessaly lived many happy youths who wandered over the hills and cared for their father's flocks. They were gentle and kind to their friends, but strong and brave when called upon to do battle for their rights.

In this pleasant valley, where the blasts of winter never blew fiercely, where the summer winds were balmy, and where the flowers bloomed always, lived Orpheus, the sweet singer. Apollo, his father, had given him a lyre; and ever since his baby hands could hold it, he had played and sung, making music so sweet that even the rocks were softened, the trees bent their branches to listen, while animals, birds, and even serpents drew near, charmed by the soft music of Orpheus' golden lyre.

One day while Orpheus was sitting beside a stream, which ceased to ripple, in its ecstasy, a pretty maiden, her great blue eyes wide open in astonishment, approached, and seating herself, listened. She was the dawn maiden, Eurydice, than whom a maiden more fair and sweet could not be found in all Thessaly.

Day after day, Eurydice came and listened while Orpheus played, until at last he said, —

“Oh, sweet Eurydice, be my friend and companion always. Come with me wherever I go. Leave me not; for when thou art not near, I am like the lyre with no one to bring forth its music.”

So Eurydice became Orpheus' companion, and they wandered through the vales and over the hills, and together they watched the flocks. But one day, Apollo sent Orpheus on a journey to a far country to which he could not take Eurydice.

How lonely it seemed to the poor little dawn-maiden! She could not play with the star-children and be happy as before, so she wandered off by herself.

One day, while she was walking through a field and filling her arms with morning-glories, she chanced to step upon a serpent which was coiled up in the grass. It bit the tender little foot, and presently Eurydice began to feel sick. The bite of the serpent was poisonous, and dropping down by the bank of the stream where she had first seen Orpheus, she died. Here the star-children found her, and they hastened to meet Orpheus on his return, and told him the sad story.

Orpheus was speechless with grief. He hung his lyre on a branch and refused to be happy, but wept and moaned for Eurydice. In tones of sorrow, the



EURYDICE.

birds and squirrels told their sympathy; and the nightingale, his dearest friend among birds, perched upon his shoulder, trilling a sweet little song of regret and sadness. At last Orpheus thought he would try to find Eurydice.

Orpheus wandered far away from Thessaly, into the Region of the Blessed, for it was here that he thought Eurydice must have gone. He had first to pass through Aides' regions; and you know this was a difficult thing to do. Upon his arrival at the rock-hewn gates, before which Cerberus kept guard, the three-headed dog rushed forward, growling angrily. Orpheus sat down upon a rock, and played upon his lyre. There came a change in the ugly monster. One of the heads ceased to look angrily; then the other head ceased to show its teeth; and at length the dog came forward to lick the hands of the sweet player, and Orpheus passed in safety. When he came to the river Styx, Charon glared coldly at him, demanding how a mortal dared enter the realms of Aides.

"O sad-eyed Charon, you have taken Eurydice across the river Styx; take me too. I pray you, for I cannot live without her." So sang Orpheus, while he played such sad, touching strains that Charon begged him to cease. Tears were falling from the eyes of the dark boatman, as he hastily guided his boat across the river.



ORPHEUS.

Orpheus went on and on through the dark, glittering caverns, heeding not the wealth which was stored in Aides' vast treasure-houses.

Aides and Proserpine were seated upon an ebony throne, while their silent attendants hovered around. Orpheus approached, paying no attention to the dark frown of Aides, and began to sing, —

“O King of the Under-world, I am not come to find out the secrets of thy realm or the greatness of thy wealth. Thou hast taken Eurydice, who to me was more than these glittering baubles. Send her back to the light of day. Grant that she come again to the home of Orpheus. Thou hast thy Proserpine. Give me, I pray thee, Eurydice.”

So Orpheus sang and played, until Proserpine's tears were falling fast, and Aides' stern face softened into pity.

“Return to thy home, Orpheus, and take Eurydice ; but look not back until you reach again the abodes of men.”

Orpheus passed on in silence, not daring to look back. He passed the river, and the dog Cerberus, and came to the rocky cave in the mountain's side, through which gleamed a streak of light from the upper world.

Soon they would have been back to their home, with their friends and their flocks ; but, sad to tell,

Orpheus, in a moment of forgetfulness, looked back to see that Eurydice was really returning with him. He saw her gentle face and outstretched arms ; but as he looked, she was borne back to Aides' kingdom, and Orpheus beheld her no more, although he tried in vain to follow, and waited for many days, singing songs of grief which melted the rocks to tears, while the wild beasts came and mourned with him. He refused to be comforted. The woods and hills no longer re-echoed his glad strains ; but sad, wild notes were heard by the little wood-nymphs, who tried to make him forget. " See," they said, " how the lonely Orpheus mourns for sweet Eurydice. Can we not make him happy once more ? " But they tried in vain.

THE STORY OF THE HALCYON BIRDS.

THE kingdom of Thessaly was far-famed for its peace and prosperity during the reign of Ceyx and his beautiful queen, Alcyone. People across the sea spoke of mountain-walled Thessaly as the country which all of the gods loved ; and they praised King Ceyx for his wisdom and justice.

But it was not always summer in Thessaly. King Ceyx heard of the death of a well-beloved brother ; and after this sad news came famine and dire diseases among his people. Ceyx believed that he had offended the gods ; and to appease them, he planned a journey to distant Ionia. Thither he would go and offer sacrifice to the gods, and so win back their favor. He told his plans to Alcyone, but she begged him to sacrifice in his own country.

“ Brave not the dangers of the deep, my husband. Surely the gods are grateful for honors wherever paid. Stay, then, at home, and look after the wants of thy unhappy people.”

“ Ah, Alcyone, thou art a woman, and dost not know that the gods are best pleased by courage and daring.

I will go, and thou shalt stay and rule in my stead. Thou wilt be brave, Alcyone, and prove thyself worthy thy great father, Æolus?"

So Ceyx determined to go, and calling together his most valiant soldiers and his most trusted sailors, they made ready to depart.

Alcyone had great cause for anxiety, for being the daughter of the wind-god, Æolus, she knew at what season the winds were treacherous, and when they were apt to rush together and lash the fair blue sea into fury.

Sadly she stood on the shore and watched the boat until it became a white speck upon the horizon. Then it vanished altogether, and Alcyone returned to her lonely palace.

For a while, Ceyx and his brave followers sailed peacefully on. The sailors rowed and sang, keeping time with the pulsing of the waves and the flapping of the sails. They reached the Ionian land in safety; and Ceyx did sacrifice in the temple of the Pythian Apollo, and learned that he was yet favored, although the oracle gave him a strange message which he scarcely understood.

Half of the homeward journey had been made. The wind began to change suddenly, and the waves ran higher and higher, crowned with crests of foam. The

ship tossed about uneasily ; and the sailors lashed their oars, and furled the sails. The sky grew angry. Wilder and wilder screamed the wind, until with an angry blast it shattered the mast of the trembling boat.

Higher and more angry grew the waves. They lifted the boat upon their huge shoulders, tossing it into dark hollows with a force and suddenness that was appalling. The sailors thought of their dear ones at home ; while the sweet face of Alcyone, tearful and sad, came like a vision to Ceyx, as he sat silent and fearful in one end of the boat, where he had lashed himself to a spar. The storm Furies were sporting with the little vessel, and, weary at last of so small a plaything, they crushed it, and ran on and on, to vent their wrath against the rock-bound coast.

Day after day the fond Alcyone went down to the seashore, straining her eyes for a glimpse of the returning sail. Each day she offered prayers, and ceased not to beg for the safe return of her husband. At last Hera took pity upon her, and told her the truth in a vision. Hera sent Iris, her swift messenger, to the far Cimmerian country, where lived Somnus, the god of sleep.

Iris started on her long journey, after clothing herself in her rainbow-colored dress, which was so beauti-



HERA.

ful that it left a path of brilliant colors in the sky after she had passed. She travelled swiftly, and before Helios had started upon his daily journey, she arrived at the palace of Somnus.

The palace was large and silent, for no song of bird or bee, or sound of human voice, was ever heard there. Between the ebony columns lurked the darkest shadows; for no light, save the light of the moon, ever entered. Before the door grew poppies, pink, and white, and red, exhaling a sleep-giving perfume. Whole fields of them stretched away for miles and miles; while on the silvery, placid surface of a lake from which flowed the river Lethe, grew dark purple lilies which caused a strange and wonderful sleep to steal over the senses of all who breathed their perfume.

Iris touched the great door of the palace, and it opened silently, as if by unseen hands. She glided through a shadowy court, where fountains played, and where the branches of tall palm-trees waved gently in the soft night air.

In the great hall, Somnus lay sleeping upon an ebony couch. All around him were strange and beautiful dream forms, some of them as delicate as the gossamer wings of the dragon-fly. There were the tiny baby dreams, which bring a smile to the

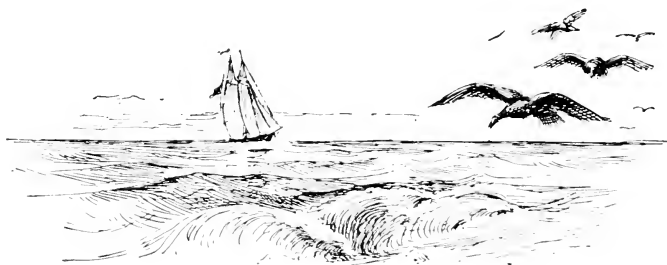
rosebud lips of the sleeping infant; and there were the strong, terrible dreams which make the bravest of men tremble.

Many beautiful dreams hovered about Iris when she entered. She waved them aside, however, and walking to the couch of Somnus, touched him softly with a flower which Hera had given her. Somnus raised his drooping eyelids, and after hearing Hera's command, sent a vision to Alcyone, in which she saw the tossing waves, the raging storm, and the peril of Ceyx, whom she knew that she would not greet again.

Sadly Alcyone bade her maidens prepare the funeral rites. She went to the seashore, to the spot where she had bidden him farewell. "I shall see him no more," she cried, weeping bitterly. She gazed across the water; and far out, the dimpling, happy waves were bearing a gleaming object toward the shore. It came nearer and nearer, until Alcyone saw that it was the form of Ceyx, which the waves were bringing to her feet. She raised her arms and sprang toward it, no longer the beautiful Alcyone, but a graceful bird, uttering strange cries. She sought to lift him on her wings. Then two birds arose from the water, and flew away together.

So Alcyone and Ceyx were united at last, and ever since then the halcyon birds have warned sailors of the

coming storm. In the placid days of winter they brood on their floating nests, and skim the surface of the waves. Then the sailors say, "The halcyon days are here. Let us be glad. There is nothing to fear."



PROMETHEUS.

FROM the top of Mount Olympus, stretching far across the broad plains of the sky, lay the Milky Way, along which were scattered the fine palaces of the gods.

In one of these grand palaces lived two giants, Prometheus and Epimetheus. They were brothers, and were much beloved because of their goodness and wisdom. Prometheus was, perhaps, the wiser of the two. His visions and speech were those of a prophet, and he saw far into the future. He even knew of events which were to take place on Mount Olympus, and could foretell the deeds of Zeus himself.

One day he looked down upon the earth, and saw that men were neither as wise nor as happy as they might be; and he determined to help them by doing a daring deed. This was neither more nor less than the stealing of the fire which the gods held sacred. Prometheus saw how, in many ways, it would help and benefit mankind, and without hesitation, he took it to the earth, and gave it to the savage men who were

living in cheerless caves, and were cold and hungry, unloving and unloved.

After they had received the gift of fire, these savage men began to grow wiser, and to build better houses, eat better food, and dress in better clothing.

Soon Zeus saw that a great change had taken place in the lives of the people of the earth; but instead of being glad, he was very angry, for he thought that Prometheus desired to take his place as ruler over the gods. He was angry, too, because Prometheus had stolen the sacred fire. So he planned a terrible punishment for the kind-hearted giant, who had never dreamed of doing an injury to Zeus.

Two heartless giants, Force and Strength, were called, together with the mighty blacksmith, Hephestus, before the throne of Zeus; and the three were commanded to chain Prometheus to the rocks which overlooked the angry sea-waves. Not content with thus making a captive of the good giant, Zeus sent a vulture to torment him with its beak and talons.

It was hard to suffer thus for doing what he had thought was right and good. Force and Strength riveted the chains upon Prometheus' arms and ankles, as if they enjoyed the work; but Hephestus had a kind heart, after all, for he said, "I dread to bind a kindred god to this wild cliff, but I must steel my soul

and dare. Zeus' high commands require a prompt obedience."

They left Prometheus alone, with only the sky and sea for company; but the sky was pitiless, and the waves sighed and moaned, as also did Prometheus, but not because of the pain he was forced to withstand from the cruel bands and savage vultures. His greatest pain was the thought of the ingratitude of Zeus; for once, when the angry Titans had planned to drive him from his throne, Prometheus had, by his counsel, changed their designs.

While Prometheus lay chained to the rocks, a group of water-nymphs came up out of the ocean, and sang to him songs of comfort and sympathy. "Why art thou here, great Prometheus?" they sang. "Tell us, for what offence does Zeus inflict this punishment?"

Then Prometheus told them how he had stolen the fire from heaven, and had given it to men; how he had put Hope into their hearts, and had given them memory; how he had taught them to watch the stars, the changing seasons, and the varying winds; how to yoke the ox, and train the steed to whirl the rapid car. "I taught them to build the tall bark, and to guide its course while lightly bounding over the waves; how to search deep into the earth for her treasures; how to chase each pale disease and soften pain; and, in

a word, Prometheus taught each useful art to men, yet have I not the art which shall free me from these chains."

The nymphs again and again came to bring solace to the unhappy Prometheus; and you will be glad to know that he was freed at last, after much suffering; for thus do freedom and right always triumph.

EPIMETHEUS AND PANDORA.

PROMETHEUS had a brother named Epimetheus, who was also very wise, and, like Prometheus, he was called the “common blessing of mankind.”

Epimetheus did not arouse the anger of Zeus, as his brother had done. Indeed, instead of binding him to a rock, Zeus sent a valuable present to Epimetheus’ palace. And what do you suppose it was? A dear little maiden, Pandora, who was to live in the palace as a friend and helpmeet for Epimetheus.

Pandora came in the swan chariot of the lady Aphrodite, and stood in the doorway to greet Epimetheus upon his return from the fields. It was a happy surprise to him, for he had grown very lonely in his grand and gloomy palace, which needed the sunshine of little Pandora’s presence.

Epimetheus was very rich, but very generous; and he could but grow more gentle and kind to the little Pandora, who reminded him constantly of the needs of others.

But we must not forget the strange gift which the gods had sent with Pandora. This was a strong box,

which Pandora desired at once to open. But when Epimetheus attempted to do so, he found this inscription upon the lid: —

“OPEN NOT THE BOX UNTIL THE GODS SHALL
SO DECREE.”

So Epimetheus carried the box into the palace, and told Pandora that she could see it whenever she liked to do so, but begged her never to try to open it. Pandora promised. She often found pleasure in sitting upon the box, tracing with her slender fingers the delicate scrolls and queer designs. The beauty of the box was a constant temptation to her. She often dreamed about the contents, and longed to take just a peep. But the kind face and warning voice of Epimetheus always prevented, for somehow he always appeared just at the dangerous moment.

One day Epimetheus went to the fields early in the morning to stay until the shades of evening had fallen. Pandora tried to forget the box, but it seemed to call to her. That very morning she had found a curiously shaped key, and she was tempted to try it in the lock. She would not open the box; she would only see whether the key really did belong to it. Her hands trembled, and her breath came quickly; she thought she heard a footstep. No; it was only the water

splashing in the fountain. With a little click, the key slid into the lock. It was a perfect fit. Pandora's left hand rested under the edge of the lid. She raised it gently, and peeped in. Oh-o-o-o! Whiz! Whir-r-r-r! The room was filled with tiny, fluttering creatures, so tiny and so lovely that they might have been winged blossoms. They fluttered about the room, while Pandora looked aghast, then floated out between the great pillars, and away across the fields.

Pandora had shut the lid down quickly after a very short space, and she hoped that they had not all escaped. She leaned her pretty head against the box and sobbed bitterly, listening between sobs for the footsteps of Epimetheus. How she dreaded his return! It seemed as if a whole year passed while she waited. It was so silent in the great room.

All at once a tiny voice which seemed to come from the box cried, "Pandora! Pandora! open the box, and let us out."

Pandora raised the lid again, and seated upon the edge of the box were two little beings, who said, "Foolish little Pandora! You have not prized the blessings which the gods sent you, else you would have guarded them more carefully. They have flown away, but we will stay with you. We are Love and Hope. We will help you to undo the mischief; but it will

take much patient effort, little Pandora, to bring back the blessings to mankind."

Just at that moment Epimetheus returned; and as he saw at a glance what had happened, his face grew sad, and he said, "Pandora, we have offended the gods by holding their command so lightly. We must now strive to regain the blessings, for if they come not to us, they will never be a gift to mortals."

So Pandora became very patient and earnest in all that she did. One by one the blessings came back for short periods, then for longer ones, until Pandora had grown to be a beautiful old woman, when all of the blessings were hers once more; and they did not remain in the box, but hovered around her wherever she went, bringing happiness to all who knew her.

PERSEUS, "THE SON OF THE BRIGHT MORNING."

IN the sunny vale of Argos, King Acrisius ruled over a brave and warlike people. But he ruled not with justice and kindness ; and he was therefore far from happy, in spite of his fertile fields, rich vineyards, and numerous flocks and herds.

After many a bitter quarrel with his brother Proetus, he had given up to him the poorer half of the kingdom, and had kept the best for himself. He had been very cruel to his beautiful daughter, Danaë, who, with her little baby Perseus, had been shut up in a room with brass walls ; and all because of a solemn prophecy.

One day a white-haired old man came to Acrisius and told him that he would lose his life at the hands of Perseus. This made the king feel very bitter toward Danaë and the innocent little child, his grandson.

Danaë's son was called the Child of the Bright Morning. He was so fair and bright, though a tiny baby, that the people declared that he was a child of the gods. His sunny smile and winning ways brought

no smiles of joy to the face of stern Acrisius, who planned in his heart to send Danaë and her child away where he should never see them again.

He dare not kill them, for he feared the terrible Erinnyes, who, with scorpions and vipers, scourged those who had offended the gods.

So Acrisius placed Danaë and her child in a large chest, and set it afloat on the restless waves of the sea. Poor Danaë was as helpless as the child asleep on her bosom. She watched the shore until it became a dark line against the horizon, and then, through her tears, she saw only the blue sea and the bluer sky. She closed her eyes, and Morpheus sent her the sweet forgetfulness of sleep.

All night, under a starlit sky, the chest floated gently. The waves rocked it to and fro. It was the pleasant halcyon days, and the winds were still; for in that peaceful season no storms ruffle the bosom of the deep:

In the morning the chest grated against the shores of the island of Seriphos. Danaë awoke with a heart full of fear. She knew not whether kindness or cruelty awaited them beyond the rugged rocks.

It happened that a brave fisherman, Dictys, had come down to the seashore to cast his net. When he saw the strange boat and its helpless occupants, he hastened

to help them out, and to assure Danaë that he meant to be kind.

"Fear not, lady," he said; "naught shall harm thee on this peaceful island. But what fate drove thee to the bosom of the deep in this frail boat? Did some one send thee thus at the mercy of the waters? He is worthy the darkest shades of Tartarus who thus cruelly treats a noble lady. For I perceive that thou art noble, perchance the daughter of a king."

"I am Danaë, the daughter of King Acrisius, who has thus unjustly sent us from his lands. Good sir, I pray thee let me come into thy house. I will serve thee with diligence, for never yet has Danaë eaten the bread of idleness."

"We are old, and apt service will be sweet to old age; but as a daughter, and not as a servant, shall ye come," said good Dictys.

So Danaë went to the home of Dictys; and full gladly she took up the spinning and weaving which the wife of the good fisherman had put aside because of her failing sight. And the little Perseus brought sunshine and gladness to all.

Dictys was the brother of Polydectes, the king of the island. When the king saw the fair Danaë, he desired her to come and live in the palace as his wife. But Danaë did not love the king, and she knew full well

that Perseus would be safer in the humble home of Dictys, so she refused to become the wife of Polydectes. This made him angry, and he began to dislike them both; but they were not harmed by his hatred until Perseus had grown to be a strong and handsome youth.

When he had grown up, Perseus won in all of the games, and far exceeded the young men of the island in the doing of brave deeds.

In those days of the long, long ago, dear children, the bravest youths of Hellas were sent into far countries to prove their courage and endurance.

There were strange and terrible monsters to kill, and there were rich and precious gifts of the gods, which were won only by the bravest. So the young men all desired most to be strong and daring. It was cowardly not to be able to win in feats of strength.

One of the great deeds which all of the young men longed to do was the killing of the Gorgon, Medusa.

She lived far away from the peaceful island; but she was the dread of all sailors and fishermen; for oftentimes they were driven by adverse winds into her icy regions, and were frozen into stone by the gaze of her cruel eyes.

Polydectes planned a way to get rid of Perseus. He taunted him with cowardice, in spite of the daring deeds which he had done, until Perseus declared that

he would prove himself worthy by killing the Gorgon. Polydectes was glad, for he was sure that Perseus would never get back.

One night Perseus dreamed a strange dream. He saw a tall and stately lady with a shining face, and a helmet upon her head. In her hands she held a glittering ægis, or shield.

"Perseus," she said, "you desire to do a more daring deed than any Hellen has yet attempted. Is your heart brave enough, and your courage great enough, that you dare to face a creature like this?" As she spoke, Athene held up the shield, on which was a face so terrible that Perseus turned pale. The locks of hair were writhing serpents, and out of the eyes glared such a look of hatred and misery that Perseus could scarcely believe that this was a picture of the once beautiful mortal, Medusa, who, because she had dared to compare her beauty and wisdom with that of Athene, had been doomed by the angry goddess to live in a far-away country with two dreadful Gorgons for companions. "Will you dare to meet Medusa, Perseus?" asked Athene.

"Try me, noble lady. I would rather die in a heroic act than remain like a horse bound by a halter."

Then Athene gave him her shield, saying, "You must not look at the Medusa when you find her, else

you will be turned to stone. But this is the ægis of an immortal, and you can look into it without harm. Hold it thus, and you can see the reflection of all that is below.

“In the land of the Grææ you will find out where the Gorgons live. Fear not these aged sisters, but be wise and watchful. They only can tell thee. They have but one eye, and their voices are hollow, and their forms unlovely; but be not alarmed by aught which they may say.”

“I will be brave,” said Perseus. “But, I pray thee, noble lady, how am I to cross the seas without a ship? I cannot build one, for Polydectes would not give me the smallest tree upon his hillsides. Nor will this beautiful ægis be of use, unless there be somewhere a sword which shall match it in excellence.”

“Thou art far-sighted, as well as brave, Perseus, and dost deserve the best gifts of the gods.”

Then Perseus saw standing beside Athene a young man of noble countenance. In one hand he held a pair of winged sandals, and in the other, a shining sword.

“Behold what Hermes has brought. These sandals will take you wherever you wish to go, and this sword can pierce even the metal scales of Medusa. Fear not, out depart.” When Perseus awoke, he found that the

dream was not all a dream, for there were the sandals, harpe, and ægis.

Perseus lost no time in putting the precious sandals upon his feet; and taking the harpe, he started at once. He felt a strange lightness of body. He started to run, but found that he could float as easily as a bird. Faster and faster he sped over land and sea, until the sunny hills of Hellas were far behind, and the dull, dark mountains of the north country rose before him.

At the foot of one of these mountains he found an ice-bound cave. Within he heard the only sounds which broke the silence,—the weird songs of the Gray Sisters. There they sat rocking to and fro, and crooning a sad, sad song, while they passed the eye from one to the other.

At first Perseus felt sad; but when he heard their words of hatred towards the race of men, he snatched the eye, and bade them tell him where the Gorgon lived. They were eager enough to get back their eye, so they told Perseus that the nymphs of the garden of Hesperides, in the far-away land of Atlas, would tell him what he wished to know. Perseus started at once for the land of Atlas, the Cyclops. It was guarded by a mighty mountain which rose far above the clouds. On the top was the unhappy giant whom Zeus had placed there to hold up the pillars of Heaven.

This was so great a task that Atlas had long since grown weary of it.

When he found that Perseus was in quest of the Medusa, he begged him to return with it, that he might gaze into its eyes, and be turned into stone. Perseus promised to do what Atlas desired. He went down the mountain and into the beautiful dreamy garden of the Hesperides. Here he found a wonderful tree upon which hung golden apples. Beneath its richly laden boughs were three of the fairest maidens Perseus had ever seen. Abashed at their beauty, but charmed by their sweet songs, Perseus drew near. Then he saw something which filled him with horror; for, twined round and round the nymphs, and caressing them with its shining folds, was a mighty serpent. Its scales glistened in the sunlight with beautiful colors. Each scale had a pearly lustre, and the serpent's eyes sparkled like diamonds. Honey was dripping into its mouth from a dish held by one of the nymphs.

When the maidens saw Perseus, they put the serpent to sleep by a magical spell, and came forth to meet him: "Who are you, and for what have you dared to come into the garden of the Hesperides? Are you Heracles, in quest of the golden apples?"

"I come not for your apples of gold, fair maidens. I am searching for the Medusa. Tell me, I pray you, when I can find her?"

The nymphs sought to keep Perseus in the garden. "Stay with us," they cried. "Here winter never comes, and the power of Medusa is only a dream that has been half forgotten."

When they found that Perseus would not give up his great purpose, they wept and pleaded again in vain.

They led him to a high cliff, and pointed to the northward; and they gave him a cap which had the power of making its wearer invisible. Perseus bade them farewell, and sped on his journey to the heart of the far country where Medusa dwelt.

As he neared the dreary shores, he put on his invisible cap, and rising high in the air, he held the shield so that he could look into it. Far away he saw the terrible creature tossing, restless, to and fro. Beside her, locked in deep slumber, were the two sister Gorgons. Perseus could not but feel sorry for the unhappy Medusa; but he wisely thought that so terrible an existence should end.

He drew near, and struck boldly with the harpe which Hermes had given him. Looking into his shield, he saw that the serpents had ceased to writhe, and he knew that Medusa was dead. He threw a goat-skin over its head, put it into a bag, and flew toward Seriphos. Onward he rushed faster than ever. Stopping at the mountain of Atlas, he held up the Medusa.

and Atlas gazed, and became a mighty mountain of stone.

Seriphos was still far away; and on and on sped Perseus over land and sea, past cloud-capped mountains and over the dreary desert wastes of Libya.

One day looking down on a dark cliff, he saw a white image. "Perchance 'tis a god whom the barbarians worship! I will go and see," he thought.

Perseus found that it was not a god, but a beautiful maiden, whose fair hair streamed in the breeze. She stood upon a rock just above the waves. Her face was full of agony, and her white arms, lifted above her head, were chained to the rock.

Perseus was filled with pity and indignation. He flashed down beside her; and when she saw the noble youth, she begged him to loose her bonds.

"Fear not, noble maiden, Perseus will gladly help to free you from these chains which some monster has forced upon tender wrists. But who are you, and why are you here?"

"I am Andromeda," she replied. "Unhappy that I am! My mother, Cassiopeia, boasted of my beauty, and to punish her, Thetis sent dreadful floods, which laid waste our fields. I am chained thus to appease the sea-gods, and they will send a sea-monster

to devour me. Look! even now it comes!" Perseus looked from the fair face of Andromeda to the restless water. Her fear was not in vain; for there, coming rapidly towards them, was a great sea-serpent, from whose wide jaws the water rushed in long lines of foam.

Andromeda closed her eyes. When she opened them again, she saw only a long reef over which the waves were dashing angrily.

Then Perseus cut the chains which bound Andromeda, and led her back to her parents, who were filled with joy, and readily consented when Perseus asked that he might take Andromeda back with him to his own country.

It was a glad home-coming to Perseus and to Danaë and the good fisherman. Polydectes had treated Danaë unkindly during Perseus' absence. He had made her work like a servant in the palace, hoping thus to make her humble.

Perseus rushed to the palace where Polydectes had bidden guests to a great feast. Standing in the doorway, he heard Polydectes tell with many a jeer how Perseus had gone forth years ago to slay the Gorgon, and had never returned. "Ha! wretched king, thou art mistaken! Wouldst thou, then, see the Gorgon? Behold! here it is!"

Polydectes threw himself upon his knees, and besought Perseus to spare him ; but even while he was speaking, his body became rigid and cold.

So Polydectes and his guests became a ring of stones which are pointed out to this day on one of the far-away islands of Greece.

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